

those countries during the season just past. Lists of the material secured by them may be expected soon.

The organization, methods, and purposes of this section have been recently explained in a bulletin and a circular, which are available on application. It should be repeated here that our efforts are on a line quite distinct from that of the Congressional seed distribution, whose object is the general and popular distribution of vegetable, field, and flower seeds.

Although the foreign seeds and plants imported by this section are the best to be found in the various foreign countries visited by our explorers, it is to be expected that relatively few of them will show conspicuous excellence under the new conditions of growth in the United States. Importations are accordingly made, in the great majority of cases, in experimental quantities only, for the use of the experiment stations and private parties having special knowledge and experience in the cultivation of particular crops. This office is interested in knowing that an actual experiment will be undertaken, that the results from the imported seeds will be brought into comparison with those of other varieties grown under similar conditions, and that an honest and intelligible report will be made. Only second in importance to a report of the superiority of a new variety is the establishment of the fact of its inferiority, especially if the reasons for this can be definitely stated. It is only by thorough, conclusive, and systematically recorded experiments that the necessity of reimportation can be avoided.

It is scarcely necessary to state that the seed of any novelty or promise should be carefully saved. Indeed, it is desirable, even in cases of apparent failure, that the seed be gathered and a second attempt made, since many crops are known not to show their true character during the first season under new conditions. Moreover, imported seed may not infrequently be weakened by age, by unfavorable conditions in transit, or by the treatment necessary in disinfection against insect pests and fungous parasites. As soon as the success of any imported species or variety is assured, it will be the policy of this Department to secure for wider distribution a larger quantity of vigorous, clean, and reliably selected seed.

Before being sent out all seeds are carefully inspected for impurities, but it is nevertheless important that new importations be distributed only to agriculturists of sufficient knowledge and experience to recognize any new weeds, insects, or fungous diseases, specimens of which should be sent to this office, and the remainder carefully destroyed by fire.

Experiment-station workers and others who may receive these inventories will accordingly confer favors by sending to this office the names and addresses of those who may be qualified by intelligence and experience, and have the interest and material facilities for testing in a satisfactory manner such plants as they may apply for, but our corre-